

Message Text

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PAGE 01 REYKJA 00807 191652Z
ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8488
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COMICEDEFOR KEFLAVIK IC

C O N F I D E N T I A L REYKJAVIK 0807

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ENRG, IC, MARR
SUBJECT: OFFSHORE LICENSE FOR SEISMIC STUDIES AWARDED TO TWO
AMERICAN FIRMS

1. GOI IS AWARDING LICENSES FOR OFFSHORE SEISMIC STUDIES
ON UNDERWATER SEDIMENTARY DEPOSITS TO TWO AMERICAN
COMPANIES (WESTERN GEOPHYSICAL CORP. OF AMERICA AND
GEOPHYSICAL SERVICE). SPECIFIC AREAS UNDER CONSIDERATION
ARE PRIMARILY ON CONTINENTAL SHELF TO NORTHWEST, NORTH AND
NORTHEAST OF ICELAND WITH SOME INTEREST IN SHELF AREAS TO
THE SOUTH AND SOUTHWEST OF COUNTRY AS WELL. IN PRESS
INTERVIEW DR. GUNNAR THORODDSEN, ICELANDIC MINISTER FOR
INDUSTRY, SAID SEARCH WILL INVOLVE SHIPBOARD SEISMIC
SURVEYS AND DOES NOT COVER ANY DRILLING OR MINING
OPERATION. THORODDSEN ADDED THAT THE ICELANDERS HAVE
BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH NORWEGIAN AUTHORITIES IN ORDER
TO BENEFIT FROM THE LATTER'S EXPERIENCE IN SIMILAR
RESEARCH UNDERTAKINGS. THORODDSEN ALSO MENTIONED IN
HIS COMMENTS TO PRESS THAT HE COULD PROVIDE NO ESTIMATE
AT THIS TIME AS TO WHEN ICELAND WOULD BE READY TO DISCUSS
LICENSES FOR ACTUAL OIL EXPLORATION NOR WOULD HE SPECIFY
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IN WHICH AREA SEISMIC STUDIES WOULD FIRST BE CONDUCTED.
FYI: MFA OFFICIAL INFORMED EMBASSY THAT GOI WAS ANXIOUS
TO FINALIZE CONCESSION ARRANGEMENTS BEFORE JUNE 25
ELECTIONS TAKE PLACE. END FYI.

2. IMMEDIATELY BEFORE PROCEEDING WITH FINAL ARRANGEMENTS,
MFA OFFICIALS CONTACTED EMBASSY TO DETERMINE IF SEISMIC

ACTIVITIES IN CONTINENTAL SHELF AREAS WOULD HAVE ANY
SERIOUS UNFAVORABLE EFFECTS ON US MILITARY SURVEILLANCE
ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY US-MANNED KEFLAVIK NATO BASE.
AFTER CONSULTING WITH NATO BASE AUTHORITIES, EMBASSY REPLIED
THAT WE FORESAW NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON BASE OPERATIONS
FROM SUCH ACTIVITIES IN THE AREAS IN QUESTION. EMBASSY
ALSO EXPRESSED APPRECIATION ICELANDERS FOR CONSULTING WITH
US ON THIS MATTER.
CHRISTENSEN

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NNN

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